



## CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE COST ESTIMATE

December 3, 2001

### **S. 990**

### **American Wildlife Enhancement Act of 2001**

*As ordered reported by the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works  
on November 8, 2001*

#### **SUMMARY**

S. 990 would establish within the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) four new grant programs to finance projects that conserve or restore fish and wildlife species and their habitats. The financial assistance authorized by the new programs would enhance or expand existing USFWS grant programs by broadening eligibility requirements to include new participants, focusing on new conservation strategies, and providing a new emphasis on certain types of species and habitats.

The bill would authorize \$600 million annually for fiscal years 2002 through 2006 for the new grant programs. In addition, the bill would authorize \$9 million for a one-time grant to New Hampshire. Finally, the bill would increase authorizations of appropriations for endangered species conservation grants, North American wetlands conservation grants, and wildlife grants by a total of \$162 million over the 2002-2006 period.

Assuming appropriation of the necessary amounts, CBO estimates that implementing S. 990 would cost \$109 million in fiscal year 2002 and about \$2.2 billion over the 2002-2006 period. S. 990 would have no effect on direct spending or receipts; therefore, pay-as-you-go procedures would not apply.

S. 990 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act (UMRA) and would impose no costs on state, local, or tribal governments. A great deal of the funds authorized by this legislation would go to state, local, and tribal governments. Any costs incurred by these governments to meet the conditions of this assistance would be voluntary.

## ESTIMATED COST TO THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

CBO estimates that S. 990 would authorize appropriations of \$627 million for fiscal year 2002 and a total of \$3.2 billion over the 2002-2006 period for USFWS grants. The estimated budgetary impact of S. 990 is shown in the following table. The costs of this legislation fall within budget function 300 (natural resources and environment).

	By Fiscal Year, in Millions of Dollars				
	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
<b>CHANGES IN SPENDING SUBJECT TO APPROPRIATION</b>					
Authorization Levels Specified by S. 990					
Authorization Level	609	600	600	600	600
Estimated Outlays	105	306	504	564	600
Indefinite Authorizations					
Estimated Authorization Level	18	25	36	41	42
Estimated Outlays	4	12	24	35	39
Total					
Estimated Authorization Level	627	625	636	641	642
Estimated Outlays	109	318	528	599	639

## BASIS OF ESTIMATE

For this estimate, CBO assumes that S. 990 will be enacted in fiscal year 2002 and that the specified and estimated authorization amounts will be appropriated each year. We further assume that such appropriations will supplement existing appropriations for USFWS grants. (For fiscal year 2002 to date, the agency has received funding of nearly \$920 million for its grant programs—\$276 million in appropriations acts and about \$644 million from permanent indefinite authority.) Outlays are estimated on the basis of historic spending patterns for USFWS conservation grant programs.

### Specified Authorization Levels

The bill specifies authorization levels for the four new USFWS grant programs that would be established by the bill, including:

- *Wildlife conservation and restoration grants.* Title I would authorize appropriations of \$350 million annually for the existing wildlife conservation and restoration account

within the federal aid-wildlife fund (Pittman-Robertson fund). Under S. 990, the account would continue to fund conservation and restoration grants, particularly those that focus on nongame species.

- *Endangered and threatened species recovery assistance.* Title II would authorize appropriations of \$150 million annually for grants to implement recovery plans for threatened and endangered species and species that may become threatened (known as at-risk species). The new grant program would focus on plans that emphasize multiple species and broad ecosystems. Those eligible for the new grants would include nonprofit organizations and private landowners.
- *Nonfederal land conservation grants.* Title III would authorize appropriations of \$50 million annually for grants to conserve lands and waters that are nationally or regionally significant but not owned by the federal government. The grants would be used by states or groups of states to acquire lands or other property interests such as easements for permanent protection of important ecosystems. Title III also would authorize a one-time appropriation of \$9 million to New Hampshire for the purchase of a conservation easement on a property in the northern part of the state.
- *Conservation and restoration of shrubland and grassland.* Title IV would authorize appropriations of \$50 million annually for grants to enhance or restore grasslands or shrublands that are the habitats of endangered, threatened, or at-risk species. Land trusts and other conservation-oriented entities would use the grants for activities such as land erosion control, planting of native species, and restoration of riverfront areas.

### **Estimated Authorizations**

CBO estimates that the bill also would increase indefinite authorizations for existing endangered species grants, North American wetlands grants, and (after 2005) federal aid-wildlife conservation grants by \$162 million over the next five years. (After 2006, when the specific authorizations in S. 990 end, the increases in indefinite authorizations caused by the bill would fall rapidly and disappear after 2010.) These increases would occur indirectly, as a result of authorizing new appropriations to the Pittman-Robertson fund.

**Interest on Balances in the Pittman-Robertson Fund.** Under existing law, interest earned on balances in the Pittman-Robertson fund is available in the following year without further appropriation either for grants made under the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (through 2005) or for traditional federal aid-wildlife conservation grants (after 2005). Assuming appropriations to the wildlife conservation and restoration account in the Pittman-Robertson fund of the entire amounts authorized by title I, CBO estimates that

interest earnings would increase by between \$7 million and \$23 million annually between fiscal years 2002 and 2006. The interest earned would be available without further appropriation (beginning in 2003), but because such earnings would depend on the appropriation of funds to the account, they are considered to be discretionary for federal budgetary purposes.

**Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Grants.** Another provision of existing law authorizes the appropriation of amounts transferred to the Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund (CESCF) each year from the general fund of the Treasury. The transfer is equal to 5 percent of each year's total deposits (including interest earnings) to the Pittman-Robertson fund and the sport fish restoration account of the Aquatic Resources Trust Fund. Appropriation of an additional \$350 million to the wildlife conservation and restoration account in the Pittman-Robertson fund would increase transfers from the general fund to the CESCF (and, correspondingly, the indefinite authorization level for appropriations from that fund) by \$18 million to \$19 million a year beginning in 2002.

**PAY-AS-YOU-GO CONSIDERATIONS:** None.

## **INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND PRIVATE-SECTOR IMPACT**

S. 990 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in UMRA and would impose no costs on state, local, or tribal governments. A great deal of the funds authorized by this legislation would go to state, local, and tribal governments. Any costs incurred by these governments to meet the conditions of this assistance would be voluntary.

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